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## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

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### THE INDUSTRIAL NURSE AS SAFETY DIRECTOR

BY VIRGINIA L. MONTGOMERY, R.N.

**I**NDUSTRY is made for the development, not the crippling, of man. Industrial managers and nurses surrounded with accident statistics, realize perhaps more keenly than others, what an expensive proposition the accident is. Expensive not only in cold cash, but in human suffering and misery, which in many cases might be avoided. Organized accident prevention is therefore not only a moral duty, but a humanitarian demand on the part of the employer of labor. It calls for the best efforts of a broad minded, big hearted individual whose sole interests are unselfish, and who holds himself responsible to one high authority;—humanity at large. Owing to the versatile character of her training, her experience with the problems peculiar to industry, and her extensive knowledge of human nature, the industrial nurse is particularly well qualified to perform the duties and obligations of Safety Director. She may occupy a responsible position in industry, in that she interprets to the injured employee the policy of the company. She forms a connection between labor and the employer of labor. Her efforts will largely affect the question of morale,—and morale, the plant spirit of coöperation and good will, is the spirit of industry. She promotes safety, sanitation, hygiene, welfare and good cheer. She comes into closer contact with the employee than his big brother, the foreman, and often eliminates friction between them by impartial judgment. It is this quality which makes her respected as Safety Director.

The pendulum of caution may swing from one extreme to the other. It is for her to strike the happy medium. Once appointed, she should select a group of intelligent, wide awake men to serve on a general committee. Among them should be at least one technically trained man to act as Safety Engineer with a general knowledge of machines and safeguards. A committee of two should also be chosen to investigate the cause of accidents as soon as the nurse has secured a history of the case. Intelligent follow-up work can then be obtained.

The nurse need have little mechanical knowledge in order to distinguish an emery wheel from a circular saw, but she comes into contact with the accidents peculiar to both, and with equal enthusiasm

attacks the evil from two sources. She directs her committee to safeguard the hazard, and spreads safety propaganda by a few tactful suggestions while dressing the injuries. She can then easily impress the necessity of more careful operation on the part of the workman while he is in that receptive, philosophical mood that so often follows an accident, and prove to be a valued educator. Statistics have proved over 70 per cent of all accidents to be the direct result of personal carelessness, and not the lack of guards on the part of the employer. It is clear that the nurse Safety Director in the role of educator becomes a force to attack carelessness in its own habitat. She may also supervise the bulletin boards, and may post attractive safety data, accident records and the like. She should possess a general knowledge of advertising in order to make the boards attract attention. She may direct "No accident" campaigns, and supervise the training of first aid crews, arranging departmental demonstrations as they become proficient. She may award prizes, all with the idea of reducing the accident record and spreading safety.

Finding an individual repeatedly making trips to the first aid rooms, her careful investigation may unearth a physical ailment which, remedied by the medical resources of the plant, will result in a total elimination of the hazard, and an increased feeling of good will toward the employer. The benefit to all is not measured in dollars and cents, but in something more lasting, more vital.

Safety work is the keynote to a new industrial era. An era in which the employer and the employee share equally in responsibility. An era in which accidents will play a minor, and production a major part. The nurse Safety Director has and will become one of the most vital parts of the new organism. Her sphere of usefulness has broadened immeasurably and her efforts will be crowned with the highest success. Prevention is ever nobler than cure.

#### THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE PLAY COMPETITION

Among the efforts to commemorate the Florence Nightingale Centennial, one of the most interesting was the Florence Nightingale Play Competition, sponsored by the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, with a prize of \$500.00 for the best play of three or four acts based on the life of Florence Nightingale, offered by the Central Council for Nursing Education.

A Committee of Four was appointed to judge the plays—Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske, Lillian Wald, Marylka Modjeska (now Mrs. Sidney Pattison), granddaughter of the well-remembered Madame Modjeska, and Alice Beer of the producing staff of the Neighborhood

Playhouse in New York. The Committee has finally submitted its report. Twenty-eight plays from many sources and states were sent in. Two plays were finally selected. The prize was awarded to Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, Department of English, University of Illinois. Honorable mention was given to Mrs. Harry Fielding Reid, Baltimore, Maryland.

It is hoped that the winning plays may some day be produced and give dramatic expression to the life of the great woman whose services to the world grow more apparent with the years.

#### REPORTS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION

It will be of interest to readers of the JOURNAL to know that the National Health Council, made up of the following members: American Public Health Association, American Red Cross, American Social Hygiene Association, Conference of State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America, Council on Health and Public Instruction of the American Medical Association, National Child Health Council, National Committee for Mental Hygiene, National Organization for Public Health Nursing, and National Tuberculosis Association, issues Bi-weekly Reports on National Health Legislation. These summaries list and abstract all new health legislation, and report progress on bills. They were intended originally for members of the Council. They are now, however, available at the cost of twenty cents a copy. It is hoped when Congress meets in December that printed reports (instead of mimeographed) may be prepared at a subscription price. Copies of current numbers can be had from the Washington office of the National Health Council, 411 Eighteenth Street, Washington, D. C. A limited supply of back numbers is also available.

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A really fascinating booklet, the Canadian Mother's Book, has just reached the JOURNAL's desk. We have seen few health pamphlets written in more attractive style or so comprehensive in subject matter. It is published by the Division of Child Welfare of the Dominion of Canada's Department of Health, Ottawa. Accompanying it are the five diet folders of the Child Welfare Section of the Canadian Public Health Association which combine, in compact form, diet lists with height and weight charts for the age groups from infancy to adolescence.

Mansfield and Richland Counties, Ohio, have been selected by the National Health Council for a five year demonstration of what a typical American community can do to increase the health and strength of the next generation. County and state officers, business men, physicians, and citizens generally have promised the heartiest coöperation.